

Message Text

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TO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

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TAGS: SREF

FOLLOWING REPEAT CINCPACREP GUAM SENT SECSTATE DATED
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QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L //N00000//

SECSTATE FOR IATF FROM SWEET

VIETNAMESE REPATRIATES

A. PHONCON SWEET-IATF AND SWEET-WISNER

1. (C) AS INDICATED PHONCONS, SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO REPA-
TRIATES HAS TAKEN TURN FOR WORSE. IN FACE OF THREATS FROM BARRIGADA
GROUP (PENDLETON-CHAFFEE RETURNEES) TO FORCE WAY OUT OF CAMP IN
ORDER TO MARCH ON GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, SENIOR CIVIL COORDINATOR
ARRANGED FOR REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL FOUR REPATRIATE CAMPS TO MEET
WITH GOVERNOR SATURDAY AFTERNOON AT 1400 HOURS. IN THE MORNING,
SENIOR CIVIL COORDINATOR (SCC) AND MEMBERS OF HIS STAFF
PLUS UNHCR REPS MET WITH REPATRIATE CAMP LEADERS IN SEPARATE SESSIONS
AL ALL FOUR CAMPS AS PART OF CONTINUING DIALOGUE WITH REPATRIATES.
2. (C) IT WAS EVIDENT AT MORNING SESSIONS THAT REPATRIATES HAD
COORDINATED THEIR QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS. IN ESSENCE, THEY ASKED
FOR PROOF THAT THE UNHCR HAD BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE PRG AND THAT
THE UNHCR HAD CONVEYED TO THE PRG THE STRENGTH OF THE REPATRIATES
DESIRE TO RETURN HOME AND THEIR WISH FOR IMMEDIATE REPATRIATION.
THEY ALSO REQUESTED EVIDENCE THAT THE US HAD PROPERLY AND PUBLICLY
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INDICATED ITS APPROVAL OF THEIR RETURN. AT BARRIGADA AN ADDITIONAL
COMMENT WAS MADE BY MR TAN (BASEBALL CAP), WHO CURRENTLY IS VERY
NATTILY DRESSED SANS BASEBALL CAP, THAT SINCE RADIO SAIGON HAD
BROADCAST ABOUT THE WARM WELCOME RESERVED FOR THE REPATRIATES, IT

WAS SLANDEROUS OF THE US AND UNHCR REPS TO SUGGEST THAT THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE ADMINISTRATION'S INACTIVITY IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR REMAINING ON GUAM. FURTHER, REFERENCE WAS MADE BY MR. TAN'S SIDE-KICK, MR. THOM, TO A SAIGON RADIO BROADCAST NAMING THE 20TH/21ST JULY AS THE TIME THE REPATRIATES WOULD BE RECEIVED.

3. (C) THE UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE RESPONDED THAT IN EARLY MAY THE USG HAD ASKED THE UNHCR TO UNDERTAKE THE REPATRIATION OF THOSE DESIRING TO RETURN TO VIETNAM AND THAT ON 26 MAY THE PRG HAD MADE A SIMILAR REQUEST. THE UNHCR HAD RESPONDED AFFIRMATIVELY TO BOTH REQUESTS BUT TO DATE HAD NOT RECEIVED NOTIFICATION FROM THE PRG TO BEGIN ONWARD MOVEMENT OF THE REPATRIATES.

4. (C) IN THE AFTERNOON SESSION, GOVERNOR BORDALLO PROPOSED THAT HE ATTEMPT TO PROVIDE A SHIP TO CARRY THE REPATRIATES BACK TO VIETNAM. REPATRIATES WOULD MAN THE VESSEL ENTIRELY BUT AN ESCORT COULD BE PROVIDED, IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS, BY THE USG. THE REPATRIATES VIEWED THE PROPOSAL WITH GREAT FAVOR. THE UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE, MR. GORDON-LENNOX, REMINDED THE GROUP THAT IF SUCH UNILATERAL ACTION WAS UNDER TAKEN, THE UNHCR WOULD WITHDRAW ITS GOOD-OFFICES.

5. (C) THE GOVERNOR AGREED TO MEET WITH THE GROUP ON THURSDAY, 24 JULY TO REVIEW THE STATUS OF HIS PROPOSAL. MR. TAN WAS NOT SATISFIED WITH THIS "VAGUE" PROMISE AND STATED THAT TOMORROW, 20 JULY, THE GOVERNOR, THE PRESS, AND THE SCC WERE INVITED TO BARRIGADA TO WITNESS A CEREMONY IN WHICH THE CAMP INHABITANTS WOULD SHAVE THEIR OWN HEADS. ON 21 JULY, THE CEREMONY WOULD FEATURE A CAPTAIN WHO HAS VOWED TO CUT OFF A FINGER (HIS OWN) ON THE SPOT AND WRITE A LETTER TO PRESIDENT FORD IN BLOOD (AGAIN HIS OWN). THE SCRIPT FOR 22 JULY ACCORDING TO MR. TAN CALLS FOR THE INHABITANTS OF THE FOUR CAMPS TO LEAVE, FORCIBLY IF NECESSARY, AND TO MARCH ON DOWNTOWN AGANA AND THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE. MR. TAN INDICATED THAT AFTER THE DEMONSTRATION

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THE REPATRIATES PROBABLY WOULD NOT RETURN TO THEIR BARRACKS. THEY WOULD DIE IF THEY HAD TO IN ORDER TO PUBLICIZE THEIR CAUSE (THIS WAS CONTRARY TO AN EARLIER INDICATION THAT ANY DEMONSTRATION OUTSIDE THE CAMPS WOULD BE PEACEFUL AND DEMONSTRATORS WOULD RETURN TO THEIR CAMPS)

6. (C) AFTER THE SCC REMINDED THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE OTHER CAMPS THAT MR. TAN'S THREATS WERE HARDLY FITTING AFTER THE GOVERNOR CONFIDENTIAL

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HAD PROMISED TO DO EVERYTHING WITHIN HIS AUTHORITY TO SPEED THEM ON THEIR WAY AND HAD AGREED TO MEET WITH THEM NEXT THURSDAY, ALL THE REPRESENTATIVES CONFERRED BRIEFLY AND DECIDED TO SUSPEND ACTION ON THE TAN SCENARIO UNTIL AFTER THE THURSDAY MEETING. HOWEVER, MR. TAN REMINDED EVERYONE THAT WITHOUT SOME INDICATION OF TANGIBLE PROGRESS NEXT THURSDAY, THE HAIRCUTTING, FINGER-REMOVING, BANZAI-CHARGING EXERCISES WOULD BEGIN.

7. (C) SUBSEQUENT TO THE MEETING WITH THE REPATRIATES, THE GOVERNOR INVITED MEMBERS OF HIS STAFF, THE SCC, THE DEPUTY SCC, AND MR. GORDON-LENNOX TO CONFER. HE INDICATED THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH HE VIEWED THE SITUATION AND STATED THAT HE MIGHT BE FORCED TO ACT ON THE SHIP PROPOSAL EVEN IF HE DID NOT RECEIVE OFFICIAL USG APPROVAL OF HIS ACTION. THE GOVERNOR ADDED THAT HE IS SENDING A MESSA

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TO THE PRESIDENT CONVEYING THE FORMER'S SENSE OF URGENCY AND INDICATING THAT SPECIAL MEASURES MAY HAVE TO BE TAKEN TO PROTECT THE PEOPLE OF GUAM.

8. (C) COMMENT: SCC URGES THAT EVERY EFFORT BE MADE TO PUSH THE PRG TO NAME A DATE FOR THEIR ACCEPTANCE OF REPATRIATES. THE UNHCR SHOULD REDOUBLE ITS EFFORTS IN THIS REGARD. AT THE SAME TIME, WE SHOULD SUPPORT, PERHAPS PUBLICLY, THE REPATRIATES REQUESTS, MADE THROUGH UNHCR CHANNELS, THAT REPATRIATE REPRESENTATIVES BE ALLOWED TO MEET WITH PRG REPRESENTATIVES AND TO RETURN TO GUAM SO AS TO INFORM THEIR FELLOW REPATRIATES. IF LAOS OR SOUTH VIETNAM ARE NOT SATISFACTORY MEETING PLACES, PERHAPS INDONESIA COULD SERVE EVERYONE'S PURPOSES. IN THE MEAN TIME SERIOUS CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE GOVERNOR'S PROPOSAL THAT A SHIP (PERHAPS ONE OF THE VIETNAMESE SHIPS) BE PROVIDED FOR UNILATERAL MOVEMENT OF THE REFUGEES TO SOUTH VIETNAM. THIS PROPOSAL ECHOES AN EARLIER REPATRIATE PROPOSAL AND HAS BEEN CONSIDERED BY OCC STAFF AS A POSSIBLE OPTION. SHOULD ACTION NOT BE TAKEN WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS TO PROVIDE THE REPATRIATES WITH CONCRETE INFORMATION ON THEIR ONWARD MOVEMENT, WE MAY BE FACED ON GUAM WITH THE BLOODY CONFRONTATION THAT EVERYONE WHO IS NEGOTIATING IN GOOD FAITH IS TRYING TO AVOID.
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